

Habitat Restoration

At a Glance

Start-Up Costs: Most start-up and equipment costs are paid for by the nonprofit organization or wildlife agency. The biggest expense is usually correctional officers to supervise the offender work crews.

Cost Savings: An offender program like this costs less than many other offender programs because most of the costs are paid for by partners.

Role in Sustainability: It helps the local ecology and connects the staff and offenders with nature. That, in turn, encourages them to participate in other sustainably programs like recycling, composting, water catchment, organic gardening and others.

Role in Public Safety: Most offenders want to join a crew that work in wildlife habitats so it gives them an incentive to not commit a violent infraction so they can stay on the crew.

On the Web

[SUSTAINABILITY AT DOC](#)



Program Summary

Offender crews can help nonprofit organizations restore natural habits, including rivers, streams, prairies and forests. It provides offenders with meaningful labor and helps restoration groups that lack the funds to pay for a large number of workers.

In 2009 when the state Department of Natural Resources cut back its fire crews administrators at Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women began searching for local opportunities to avoid offender idleness. They formed a partnership with the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, a nearby nonprofit organization that needed help removing a noxious weed that was threatening salmon-bearing streams and rivers. Offenders who participate can also earn a certificate from the nonprofit group that allows them to apply for a certificate from the Department of Agriculture so they can become a licensed pesticide applicator.

Many habitat restoration organizations can benefit from having offender work crews help with their projects. It also benefits the prison by providing offenders with an incentive to not commit a violent infraction so they can join a crew.

Action Plan: Habitat Restoration

Step by Step

Step 1: Contact a local nonprofit organization that restores natural habitats to see if they need assistance.

Step 2: Determine what the cost would be for security and transportation.

Step 3: Sign a memo of understanding with the nonprofit group or state agency that specifies how costs will be shared.

Step 4: Have the partner organization provide training for offenders.

Step 5: Begin scheduling off-site work crews.



Testimonials

“I like knowing I can give back to society for what I’ve done to end up here. It’s nice knowing I can bring my family out here to see what I helped build.”

— Rodney Wallace
Former Offender
Larch Corrections Center

“We have three staff members in our organization who are available to remove the noxious weed, which isn’t a lot of people. With the work crew from the women’s prison we’re able to get a lot more done.”

— Mendy Harlow
Habitat Biologist
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

Participating Prisons

- Cedar Creek Corrections Center
- Larch Corrections Center
- Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women
- Olympic Corrections Center

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